

take up the alarm and jump away from tree to tree to safer quarters.

MALERKOTLA STATE,
PUNJAB.

IFTIKHAR ALIKHAN,
Heir Apparent.

August 24, 1938.

[Deer frequently associate with monkeys. The explanation is the advantage they derive from being able to eat the fallen fruit and leaves which the monkeys drop in their careless and destructive feeding. Incidentally it is possible that the association is mutually beneficial, the persistent watchfulness of either being a safeguard against attack. Blanford speaks of langoors giving out their characteristic alarm call at the sight of bolting deer: which may be taken as an instance of the effectiveness of the association between these animals.—EDS.]

VI.—OTTERS AND CROCODILES.

Some weeks ago I went out to Pushkar Lake, which you probably know of by reputation.

The tank is sacred and naturally all shooting is very strictly prohibited. Crocodiles used to abound there living on fish and an occasional stray cow or unwary pilgrim.

As there seemed to be fewer crocodiles than usual that day I asked the care-taker of the lake side house where I was, why the usual numbers were not visible. He told me that they were being killed off by families of *Jalmanus* which had recently come to the lake. Not knowing this name I asked for a description of the animal. At that moment the heads of a family of otters showed up in the middle of the lake and the man pointed them out as the slayers of the crocodiles.

A few days later when I was retailing this tale to some College boys I was interrupted by a boy from Bundi who told me that he had actually seen an otter attacking a crocodile.

This is his story. He was out with His Highness of Bundi and a party late one night shooting fish by the light of a strong searchlight. These fish—variety unknown—but of some considerable size, are apparently attracted to the surface by the beam of light. While out on the lake their attention was drawn to a noisy commotion at some distance from their boat. The beam was directed towards the noise and they saw a crocodile on the surface mouth wide open making a sort of barking noise and on the back of the crocodile scratching and biting at the back of his upper jaw and eyes was a large otter. The boy who told me this story is very keen on Nature study and knows quite a lot about animals and birds. He was very definite about all the details he gave me and said the fight or struggle showed up very clearly in the beam of the searchlight. They watched the struggle for some time

and then the otter dropped off into the water and the crocodile sank.

It has struck me that these details may be of interest to some of the members of your society. They are hearsay but with regard to the story from Bundi I can easily ask for evidence of other members of the party who were out that night.

Are otters the natural enemies of crocodiles? The number of crocodiles now to be seen at Pushkar is less than it used to be. The lake is full of fish of the carp variety who are fed by pilgrims. They come up in vast shoals to take parched gram and on two occasions, in my presence, the commotion made by the fish on the surface fighting for the gram has attracted the attention of crocodiles.

The first time a crocodile cruising about some 75 yards from the shoal turned and swam slowly in our direction, eyes just showing above the water. Some 20 yards from the bank the crocodile sank and a few seconds later came up with a rush and swirl, mouth wide open, from under the centre of the shoal not more than five feet from where I was standing feeding the fish. On the second occasion the crocodile adopted similar tactics to begin with but instead of submerging at about 20 yards carried on, on the surface, and when some 4 or 5 yards from the shoal suddenly put on a terrific spurt and sailed into the middle of the shoal mouth wide open.

The tank in a normal winter is about 700 yards long by 300 to 400 yards wide and is surrounded by temples and bathing ghats. In flood the area is trebled.

According to the belief of the natives of the place each female crocodile lays 108 eggs in the laying season—the number of beads in the Hindu Rosary.

MAYO COLLEGE,

AJMER.

July 8, 1938.

C. HOWSON,

Lt.-Col.

VII.—A BABY ELEPHANT.

A baby elephant produced as a surprise by one of the Forest Department elephants in the Naini Tal district, has been presented to the Zoological Society of London.

Nine months old, after a happy life of adventure, beating in line with nineteen other elephants for birds and big game;—being made a great pet of by the Viceroy's household, when in his camp at Kaladhungi where four tigers were shot;—she has now left her native country, and experiences for the first time in her young life travel by rail and sea.

She travelled down to Bombay with her Mahout in a horse box. There, by the kind assistance of the Bombay Natural History Society, she was put on board a B.I. boat, in charge of Mr. Weeks, one of the officers, with full instructions as to feeding and care,